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A Good Father

What makes a good father? In our society, a good father has to have responsibility, be there for his child, and respond to the needs of them. But a good father, does not have to be a real dad. For example, in Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, the protagonist, Jean Louise (Scout) Finch has an elder brother, Jeremy Atticus (Jem) Finch. Jem acts as a father figure to Scout when their real father, Atticus Finch is not around. A good father sometimes is not good at first, or maybe does not come across as good in the beginning. For example, in Hannah Tinti's *The Good Thief*, Benjamin Nab adopts the protagonist, Ren from St. Anthony's Orphanage for Boys. At first, he says he is Ren's brother and lies about their mother and father being killed. Ren and Ben go out to different towns and meet different people, until Ren figures out that Ben steals from the dead. He digs up dead people and steal their stuff. It is not until the end where Ren figures out that Benjamin Nab really is his father and abandoned him when he was a baby. Ben is Ren's father figure because he keeps him safe. Both Jem and Ben are really interesting characters, so that is why I have decided to compare and contrast them to see if they have what it takes to be a good father.

A good father must be responsible. In *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Jem takes high responsibility in looking after his little sister, Scout. He must watch her like a hawk. "Take care of Scout, you hear? Don't let her out of your sight." (pg. 78) In this quote, Scout and Jem must figure out which way the wind is blowing. Jem must watch Scout as they walk past the Boo Radley's place, a mysterious man, who has been painted by rumors to say that he is dangerous. In addition, Benjamin Nab is not that responsible. He is not around much of the time, after he adopts Ren. "When Ren woke up the next day Benjamin was gone." (pg. 87) This

means that Benjamin kind of leaves Ren places without him. So, between Jem and Benjamin, I think that Jem is more responsible.

A good father also must respond to the needs of the child and be there for them. For example, Jem is always there for Ren. He helps her in a new environment, her new school. Jem also takes care of Scout under any circumstances. "Besides, Jem had his little sister to think of." (pg. 38) This means that he can't be doing to much horse play, he had to make sure his little sister is safe. Also importantly, Jem is looking out for Scout's health. When Scout finds some gum near the Radley's place, Jem tells her to spit it out right away. "'Don't eat things you find, Scout." (pg. 37) In addition, Benjamin Nab responds to the needs of Ren. "There were still a few chunks of bread and sausages and pieces of salted cod..." (pg. 70) This means that Benjamin Nab responds to the needs of Ren by giving him food to fulfill his famine. On the other hand, Benjamin was not there for the first 12 years of Ren's life. He still did not know how his left arm was missing, at the beginning of the book. "He was missing a hand." (pg. 9) Both Jem and Benjamin are very good in responding to the child's needs and being there for them, which makes them good fathers.

The two men, are both very good fathers. They meet all the qualities a good father must have. But, if I had to get very specific, I think that Jem Finch is a better father figure than Benjamin Nab. For example, Benjamin lies to Ren for the longest time by saying he was his brother and that his mother got killed by Indians. If Jem lied, he'd probably get punished. In addition, Benjamin does many weird things with Ren. They dig up dead bodies just to steal the things the bodies are wearing. Such as jewelry and clothes. Also importantly, Benjamin brings a lot of his friends near Ren that drink alcohol or liquor. If you notice, the Finch kids only hang around with the people they know, such as Dill, Miss Maudie, and many more. They know them and they are not strangers to them. Jem is a good father figure to Scout because he knows what is good for Scout and what is not.